Pakistan is forcibly and illegally occupying a part of the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of the Indian Union. Under the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, which arc the cornerstones of our bilateral relation, both countries are committed to resolving all outstanding issues peacefully through direct bilateral discussions.

Demarcation at Indo-Bangladesh Border

†552. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH LALAN':
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that matter pertaining to demarcation of border between Bangladesh and India is still controversial;

(b) if so, the areas on the border which arc still controversial;

(c) the action taken by Government so far to solve this controversy; and

(d) by when, this controversy would be solved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) Joint demarcation of about 6.5 km of the India — Bangladesh land boundary in Tripura, West Bengal and Assam is yet to be completed. There are also outstanding matters relating to exchange of enclaves and adverse possessions. The Government of India is keen on an early settlement of all boundary-related matters with Bangladesh in accordance with the terms of the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement of 1974.

The two Governments have agreed to constitute Joint Boundary Working Groups to address all pending matters.

The first meeting of the India — Bangladesh Joint Boundary Working Groups on Border Demarcation, and on Enclaves and Adversely Possessed Territories was held in Dhaka from July 2-4, 2001. Both sides presented their respective positions on these matters in order to facilitate a clear understanding of each others points of view and to address the issues in a pragmatic and time-bound manner.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.